

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of sending data packets in an access network or satellite infrastructure network supporting sub-networks such as IP logical sub-networks, private networks, or multi-recipient groups, combining different terminal stations of the network, in which method ~~each~~ a data packet is associated with an addressing header and each terminal station of the network is associated with a satellite terminal or a ground station located in the coverage of a particular spot of a particular satellite,

wherein the addressing header of ~~each~~ the data packet further contains a "label" field containing an identifier characteristic of ~~a one~~ a sub-network to which ~~said a target~~ terminal station, to which the packet is addressed, belongs and characteristic of at least one spot associated with the identifier, said at least one spot including the spot in which the satellite terminal or the ground station station, with which said ~~target~~ terminal station is associated, is located, wherein at least one satellite uses the identifier contained in the header of the data packet to transmit the data packet to the at least one spot associated with said identifier, and wherein a satellite terminal or ground station located in said at least one spot has a list of authorized identifiers used as a reception filter, so that the satellite terminal or ground station processes the data packet only if the identifier contained in the header of the data packet is in the list of authorized identifiers of said satellite terminal or ground station.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein data packets are sent with no connection between the sending satellite terminal or the sending ground station and the receiving satellite terminal or the receiving ground station.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the terminal stations of the network connected to the satellite terminals or to the ground stations consist of user terminals, routers, and data or service servers, in particular address resolution protocol servers.

4. - 7. (canceled).

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the data packets are containers adapted to contain, among other things, IP packets, i.e. packets conforming to the standards for transfer of data in non-connected mode over Internet Protocol networks.

9. - 17. (canceled).

18. (currently amended): A satellite telecommunications system for implementing the method according to claim 1, the system including:

at least one satellite terminal having a table for each Internet service provider with which are associated user terminals connected to satellite terminals, said table establishing the relationship between target user terminal addresses and the identifiers labels associated with them, and the satellite terminal listening to receiving identifiers labels of sub-networks to which the user terminals associated with it belong,

at least one Internet service provider associated with a label server adapted to supply an addressing identifier label as a function of a target terminal station address of a data packet, and

at least one satellite having access to a table establishing the relationship between identifiers labels allocated to sub-networks and the spots of its satellite system, and means for sending a data packet associated with a given identifier label only in the spot or spots linked to said identifier label

wherein the satellite terminal has the list of authorized identifiers used as the reception filter, so that the satellite terminal processes the data packet only if the identifier contained in the header of the data packet is in the list of authorized identifiers of said satellite terminal.

19. (canceled).

20. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein said particular satellite has plural spot beams.

21. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the label in each header is selected from a set of plural labels each representing a different combination of subnetwork and at least one satellite spot.

22. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the headers of at least some data packets destined for terminals in the same subnetwork but in different satellite spots will contain different labels.

23. (new) The method according to claim 1, wherein each sub-network has a different Internet service provider.

24. (new) The method according to claim 1, wherein the processing of the data packet by the satellite terminal or ground station comprises extracting the address of the target terminal station and sending the data packet to the target terminal station.

25. (new) The method according to claim 1, wherein each sub-network is a virtual sub-network.

26. (New) The satellite telecommunications system according to claim 18, wherein the satellite terminal stores the sending label of the ground station with which it is associated, by means of which label it can send broadcast data packets to said ground station.

27. (New) A satellite telecommunications system according to claim 18, wherein a terminal station and said satellite terminal constitute one and the same equipment unit and are combined in the same device.

28. (New) A satellite telecommunications system according to claim 18, wherein the terminal station is a user terminal which, with said satellite terminal, constitutes one and the same equipment unit.

29. (New) A satellite telecommunications system according to claim 18, wherein the satellite contains said table establishing the relationship between identifiers allocated to sub-networks and the spots of its satellite system.

30. (New) A satellite telecommunications system according to claim 18, wherein the table establishing the relationship between identifiers allocated to sub-networks and the spots of its satellite system is contained in a network control center.